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THE
Tenant's Sanitary Catechism
FOR PLACES OUTSIDE LONDON.

THE attention of householders and lodgers is directed to the powers given to local authorities and to the Local Government Board by the Acts mentioned below. Occupiers finding that their houses are not in the sanitary condition prescribed by those Acts, should fill in the answers to the questions printed below in the spaces provided for them, and should then send this paper, either signed by themselves OR NOT, to the Sanitary Inspector for the district, who will be obliged when he receives it to enquire into the matter.

Any person employed in an insanitary workshop may use this form to describe it, and in such cases the form should be sent either to the Sanitary Inspector of the district or to the Factory Inspector, Home Office, Whitehall, S.W., who will cause enquiry to be made.

This leaflet will also be found useful for anyone who is enquiring into the sanitary conditions of any district outside the County of London.

QUESTIONS.

ANSWERS.

1. Name of town or village.
2. Name of local sanitary authority.
3. Name of street and number of house.
4. Name of occupier or occupiers.
5. Name and address of reputed owner.
6. Has the house a water closet or an earth closet or privy for the sole use of its inmates?
7. If not, how many (*a*) houses and (*b*) persons use the same closet?
8. If a water closet, is it properly flushed with water from a cistern separate from that used for drinking purposes?
9. Is any of the rooms fitted with a proper sink? Is the sink in sound condition and trapped?
10. Is there a properly constructed dust bin or sanitary pail for the sole use of the inmates?

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QUESTIONS.

ANSWERS.

11. Is it regularly emptied?
12. Is the water supply abundant? Is it constant or intermittent? If from a well is it so situated and constructed as to be free from contamination? Are the cisterns, if any, regularly cleaned and in an accessible place for inspection? Are taps conveniently placed?
13. Are the floors throughout in a proper state of repair?
14. Is the roof sound and watertight?
15. Are the ceilings and walls clean and in repair and free from cracks?
16. Is any part of the house damp?
17. Is the back yard properly drained and paved?
18. Has the house through ventilation or is it a back-to-back house?
19. If underground rooms are used for sleeping in (*a*) what height are they from floor to ceiling, (*b*) what distance are they below the surface of the street, and (*c*) how are they lighted, ventilated and drained?
20. How many rooms are there in the house?
21. Is the house or are any of the rooms so overcrowded as to be dangerous or injurious to the health of the inmates?
22. Is *any* part of the house in such a condition as to be a nuisance or to be dangerous or injurious to the health of its inmates?
23. What is the space, back and front, between the house and the nearest buildings?
24. Are there any works near the house which cause bad smells or noises at night? Are there any factory chimneys which persistently pour smoke upon this dwelling?
25. What rent do you pay?
26. Was the house in proper condition when you became the tenant?

QUESTIONS.

ANSWERS.

27. What is the size of the garden, if any?

28. Is the supply of good cottages in your district equal to the demand?

(Answers to 27 and 28 will indicate how urgent is the need of further enquiry with a view to forcing the local authority to use its powers to acquire land for small holdings and allotments and for building cottages.)

Signature

Address

Date

NOTES.

The following quotations and notes may be found useful.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1875.

Section 36. If a house within the district of a local sanitary authority appears to such authority . . . to be without sufficient water closet, earth closet, or privy, and an ashpit furnished with proper doors and coverings, the local authority shall by written notice require the owner or occupier of the house . . . to provide a sufficient water closet, etc. . . . Provided that where a water closet, earth closet, or privy has been and is used in common by the inmates of two or more houses, or if, in the opinion of the local authority, . . . may be so used, they need not require the same to be provided for each house.

(N.B. But the local authority should insist on each house having its own closet.)

Section 40 says that every local authority shall see that all drains, water closets, etc., within their districts are constructed and kept so as not to be a nuisance or injurious to health.

Section 41 gives the local authority power to charge the owner of a house the cost of putting the drains thereof in order.

Section 46. Where on the certificate of the medical officer of health or of any two medical practitioners it appears to any local authority that any house or part thereof is in such a filthy or unwholesome condition that the health of any person is affected or endangered thereby, or that the whitewashing, cleansing, or purifying of any house, etc., would tend to prevent or check infectious disease, the local authority shall give notice in writing to the owner of such house, etc., to whitewash, cleanse, or purify the same. . . .

Section 62 empowers the local authority to require houses to be supplied with water.

Section 90 gives the Local Government Board power to allow a local authority to make byelaws as to houses let in lodgings.

Section 91 defines a nuisance liable to be dealt with summarily under the Act as:

- (1) Any premises in such a state as to be a nuisance or injurious to health ;
- (2) Any pool, ditch, gutter, watercourse, privy, urinal, cesspool, drain, or ashpit so foul or in such a state as to be a nuisance or injurious to health ;
- (3) Any animal so kept as to be a nuisance, etc.;
- (4) Any accumulation or deposit which is a nuisance, etc.;
- (5) Any house or part of a house so overcrowded as to be dangerous or injurious to the health of the inmates, whether or not members of the same family ;*

* Overcrowding is defined in the Model Byelaws as being more than one adult to three hundred cubic feet of air space. Two children equal one adult.

(8) Any chimney (not being the chimney of a private dwelling house) sending forth black smoke in such quantity as to be a nuisance.

Section 109 provides that on a second conviction within three months for overcrowding, the local authority may apply to a court of summary jurisdiction for a closing order for such time as the court may think necessary.

Section 157 gives power to urban local authorities to make various building bye-laws to secure sanitary dwellings and to close buildings or parts of buildings in which the drainage, sanitary conveniences, etc., make them unfit for human habitation.

Section 114 says that if any house is rendered unfit for human habitation through offensive effluvia arising from any factory adjoining, any ten inhabitants in an urban district may complain to the local authority, who shall enquire into and abate it. A heavy fine may be imposed.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES ACT, 1890.

Section 31. Any four householders in or near a street may complain in writing of the condition of any house or houses in that street, and the medical officer of health will then be compelled to inspect and report on their condition to the local authority.

Section 38 gives power to the local authority to order the removal of any building which, though not in itself unfit for human habitation, causes an obstruction to other buildings by stopping ventilation, impeding light, or preventing necessary improvements to such other buildings from being carried out.

HOUSING, TOWN PLANNING, ETC., ACT, 1909.

Sections 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18 give extended powers to local authorities for keeping houses in repair and closing or demolishing insanitary dwellings. The duty of making from time to time a house to house inspection is placed upon the local authority. The local authority having served an order upon any landlord for necessary repairs, etc., may in the event of their not being carried out within the time specified in the order, do the work itself and recover the cost from the landlord. Further, the landlord of a house in a borough or urban district with a population of fifty thousand or more at a rent not exceeding twenty-six pounds, or in any other district at a rent not exceeding eight pounds, is bound to make it "in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation" before letting it, and afterwards to keep it so; and damages may be recovered from him if he neglects to do so and the tenant suffers thereby. Further, the local authority may in such cases put the house in proper condition and charge the landlord with the cost. The local authority under this Act make orders with regard to the closing and demolition of houses unfit for human habitation instead of applying to a magistrate for such orders. Any owner may appeal to the Local Government Board. The local authority may pay to any occupier of property against which a closing order is made a reasonable sum to cover the cost of removal, and this sum may be recovered from the owner.

Section 10 provides that if the local authority refuses to take steps to deal with insanitary property, any four inhabitant householders in the district (whether in the same parish or not) may appeal to the Local Government Board, who may thereupon order a public enquiry, and as a result of such enquiry may make an order directing the local authority to take the necessary steps. In the case of a rural sanitary authority, an appeal to the Local Government Board may also be made by the county council, parish council, or parish meeting, or by four inhabitant householders.

Section 17 (7) provides that an underground room used as a sleeping place shall be deemed unfit for human habitation if it is more than three feet below the surface of the street and not on the average seven feet from floor to ceiling, and if, further, it does not comply with the regulations made by the local authority for proper ventilation, drainage, etc. Such regulations must be made by the local authority when required to do so by the Local Government Board, and must be approved by the Local Government Board. Underground rooms not complying with these regulations are not necessarily closed for other purposes than use as sleeping places.

Section 43 prohibits from the time of the passing of this Act the building of back to back houses.

The Housing, Town Planning, etc., Act, 1909, and the Small Holdings Act, 1908, have greatly increased the powers of local authorities, both rural and urban, to acquire land and build houses. Information as to these powers will be found in other leaflets and pamphlets.

Any Act of Parliament may be obtained for a few pence from P. S. King & Son, Great Smith Street, Westminster, S.W.

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